

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor

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GOVERNOR KAINE COMMEMORATES ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

*~ Calls attention to the needs of more than 900 children waiting for
permanent homes ~*

RICHMOND – Governor Timothy M. Kaine commemorated Adoption Awareness month in Virginia as part of a national effort to raise awareness of the needs of children in foster care. As Virginians enter the holiday season, more than 900 children in the Commonwealth are waiting for a permanent, loving home. An extensive database allows prospective adoptive parents to search for children by age, region, gender and other demographics. "[Meet the Kids](#)" is a user-friendly feature on the Virginia Department of Social Services' [Web site \(www.dss.virginia.gov\)](#) and is a complete database of all children in Virginia awaiting adoption from foster care and group homes.

"Adoption is the greatest gift a child in the foster care system can receive," said Governor Kaine. "'Meet the Kids' is an effective tool that can help connect children waiting to be adopted with loving homes. By bringing these kids together with adoptive parents, we can help ensure a better future for them, and a better future for the Commonwealth."

Governor Kaine has proclaimed November as Adoption Awareness Month in the Commonwealth. First Lady Anne Holton launched her initiative, "For Keeps," earlier this year to identify and develop ways to find and strengthen permanent families for children in foster care to ensure that they develop into successful, independent adults.

"Adoption Awareness Month is a perfect opportunity for families across Virginia to consider whether they can offer the love and support of a stable, lifelong home to a child in foster care," the First Lady said. Specifics on the First Lady's initiative can be found at www.forkeepsvirginia.org.

"For people looking to create a loving home for a child, the database is a quick and easy resource you can use privately and at your convenience. We hear tremendous success stories about how adoption has enriched the lives of children and families across

the state. We hope people will use the database and search capabilities to provide more waiting children with forever families,” said VDSS Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr.

[Virginia's Heart Gallery](#) is a series of traveling adoption awareness exhibits featuring Virginia children waiting to be adopted. *Virginia's Heart Gallery* exhibits will remain on display through Dec. 31 at the following locations:

- **Piedmont Region**

James River Conference Center
400 Court St.

Lynchburg, VA

Contact: Dawn Cardwell, DSS regional specialist, (540) 857-7947

- **Western Region**

Blacksburg Public Library
200 Miller St.

Blacksburg, VA

Contact: Tammy Francisco, DSS regional specialist, (276) 676-5487

- **Central Region**

Children's Museum of Richmond
2929 West Broad St.

Richmond, VA

Contact: Sondra Draper, VDSS adoption specialist, (804) 726-7524

For those who cannot visit a *Virginia's Heart Gallery* display or who want to see gallery-featured children from all regions, a Web version is available. Like “Meet the Kids,” the online *Virginia's Heart Gallery* also allows potential adoptive parents to search for children by demographics.

For more information on adoption, call Virginia's adoption hotline at 1-800-DO-ADOPT, contact your local department of social services or visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/ap/index.html>.

“Meet the Kids” and *Virginia's Heart Gallery* site:
http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/ap/children_for_adoption.html.

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